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WASHINGTON TIDES

To the Right—Or Left?

by Ernest K. Lindley



WHATEVER else may be said about it, President-elect Kennedy's mandate surely includes the policies as to which he and his opponent were in essential agreement. These cover large areas: Strengthening our defenses, nearly the entire range of foreign policy, and much in the domestic field. Although sharp issues were drawn, most were narrow. Nixon, after all, did not run as a stand-patter or reactionary. He proposed to build on or move ahead from the Eisenhower record. Every departure was to a more advanced position.

That, according to conservatives such as Senator Goldwater, was a strategic error. The election results, however, do not support such a conclusion. Nixon and Lodge, a liberal Republican, ran well ahead of their party in the nation as a whole but behind most of the liberal Republican candidates for the Senate. Case of New Jersey and Saltonstall of Massachusetts won easily in states carried by Kennedy. J. Caleb Boggs of Delaware, a moderate with labor backing, defeated a conservative Democrat in a third state which went for Kennedy. Sens. John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky and Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, both liberals, ran ahead of the Republican national ticket. By contrast, conservative Republicans such as Andrew F. Schoeppel of Kansas, Carl T. Curtis of Nebraska, and Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota ran behind. The most notable exception to the rule was Styres Bridges of New Hampshire, the Republican dean.

CONSERVATIVE TREND?

Liberal Democrats were elected to the Senate in five states carried by Nixon: Alaska, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Tennessee. And such outstanding liberals as Douglas in Illinois and Humphrey in Minnesota ran far ahead of Kennedy.

Allowance must be made for the religious issue and for the personal qualities of the Senatorial candidates who outran their national tickets. But there is no evidence of a trend to the right in the Senatorial results.

Republican gains in the House were too small to change the balance materially. They will be more than offset by the power of the new Presi-

dent, with patronage and other leverage at his command, to influence the Democratic majority. On a few matters, including some of particular interest to leaders of organized labor, a conservative coalition probably will serve as a check. But Kennedy should be able to muster sufficient Southern support for some of the welfare measures which were stopped in the 86th Congress by Presidential opposition.

The Southern senators and congressmen who worked hard and, in many states, with success for the Democratic national ticket have earned respectful attention from the White House. And the Vice President-elect, who was so largely responsible for mobilizing them, thus producing presidential electoral votes, will see that they get it. But many are moderates and on certain issues liberal.

A FARM MANDATE?

Kennedy's farm program surely did not generate a mandate. I doubt that he grieves over that. Indeed, I wondered during the campaign whether he or very many other people understood his farm program. I would not venture to predict what sort of farm legislation the new Congress will contrive.

On the whole, the President-elect should feel rather comfortable about the composition of the new Congress. It will relieve him if he does not do so himself, of a few of the more extreme promises of the Democratic platform. But it probably will go along with the bulk of his initial program.

The President-elect made a good start in requesting J. Edgar Hoover and Allen W. Dulles to continue in their present posts. The Central Intelligence Agency has been a target for Democratic criticism at times. After the ill-fated U-2 flight there were suggestions that Dulles should resign. He himself offered to do so to save the President embarrassment. The President wisely decided to keep him. As most CIA operations are secret, outsiders cannot judge their efficiency. But responsible Congressional leaders of both parties have deep respect for Dulles. No one, in my judgment, has a better understanding of Soviet strategy and tactics. It is reassuring to know that he will stay.